

## Digital Tools for Students with Special Needs

There are several amazing websites that do an excellent job of incorporating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. UDL is all about creating learning environments that meet the needs of all types of learners—closed captioning for the hearing impaired, read-aloud capabilities for the visually impaired, for example.

The following are examples of free resources available to teachers and families:

- For learning tools—everything from text-to-speech, writing tools, and writing aids specifically designed for children with handwriting issues, visit the [UDL Tech Toolkit Wiki](http://udltechtoolkit.wikispaces.com/Home) (<http://udltechtoolkit.wikispaces.com/Home>.)
- To help children create and publish their own books, as well as have them read back to them, see [CAST's UDL Book Builder](http://bookbuilder.cast.org/) (<http://bookbuilder.cast.org/>). Try it out by sitting down with a child and helping him create an original book. Then share the book with friends. Or begin by reading books other people have created for the world to see.
- To view stories told in sign language (with subtitles and an audio option) visit [Signed Stories](http://www.signedstories.com/) (<http://www.signedstories.com/>.) The literary categories you'll find here include: Adventure, fairytales and folktales, slimy scary books, and funny stories. Delve in!
- Go to the award-winning [The Mother Goose Book Club](http://www.mothergooseclub.com/) (<http://www.mothergooseclub.com/>) to find children's nursery rhymes sung aloud by fun characters. Also, see "Rhyme Activity Tips for Parents and Teachers" to learn more about how reading, reciting, and singing along with Mother Goose rhymes can give beginning readers a boost.

For more information, please visit Reading Rockets <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/54156/>

